

Telling the Next Generation the Good News

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[0 : 00] These first six verses that speak of the, well, the resolve of God's people to pass on the message of God's truth to our children.

I often choose the psalm after a children's address, because surely it has to be in the hearts of this congregation that we do pass on the good news of the Lord Jesus to our children.

And particularly in this day and age when there's so much confusion about what we teach our children, what's been taught to our children, what's been taught particularly in our schools about what's deemed to be truth, how truth is regarded as relative in the secular age, then surely it's the responsibility of those who love the Lord Jesus to exercise our God-given duty, a duty not to hide the truth of God's word from our children.

We have that responsibility. We have that responsibility not to hide the word of truth from our children. This is not the first time I've used Psalm 78 in a baptismal service.

Because, you know, we are to be reminded, we are to be reminded again and again of passing on the message, passing the message of the gospel of Lord Jesus, passing that message to our children.

[1 : 28] So, let's be reminded again that we surely have to take seriously our responsibilities to those whom God has given us as gifts, as children.

Our children are part of the community of God's church. Now, you know, we talk a lot about community, the community around us.

But first and foremost, first and foremost, we have to see, to see before us, community in what we call the church, and the fact of our children being integral to that community.

As we just have done, we've baptised a little child. That sign of that child being integrated into the church, the visible church of the Lord Jesus. As we said before the baptism, we don't presume on conversion by baptism.

Absolutely not. We don't talk about what folks call baptismal regeneration or at all. But the sign of cleansing, the sign that the water is, the sign of cleansing on, as we saw this morning in Catherine's head, and the seal of promise given in that sign, that salvation is guaranteed when the little one gives her life to the Lord Jesus.

[2 : 47] Well, you know, that's cause in itself for rejoicing and cause for us to remember our children, to bring our children before God, to pray for them, to pray for those who are baptised in the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And so just keeping that context of children in relation to the community, the church community, to help us in our thoughts on this so important matter, then we turn to Psalm 78.

Because we've seen here a resolve, a resolution, a resolve that actually we need to grasp from the context of the psalm.

When was the psalm written? Well, certainly the psalm was written many hundreds of years after the events that are recorded in this psalm. It's a long psalm. I thought it's one of the longest psalms in the book of Psalms.

So it's a psalm with a context. And of course the context is God leading his people, God's faithfulness towards his people, God leading his children out of Egypt.

[3 : 56] It's a history lesson. This psalm is a history lesson. It's a history lesson from the time of God delivering his people from Egypt to the time of David being anointed as king.

You can see that in the flow of this psalm. And this psalm tells of God's goodness. God's goodness to his people despite his people's unfaithfulness. It tells of God's mercy.

It tells of God's faithfulness to his people. Yes, in the people sinning and rebelling against God, but God in his mercy, God in his love, forgiving his people, and even in punishment, the people

returning to God, rebelling, and God in his mercy forgiving them, bringing them back to himself. So it's a history lesson in God's goodness, in God's mercy, and God's grace. It's a history lesson for all generations. Not to forget God.

Not to forget the God who delivers his people. The God, yes, who punishes iniquity. The God who forgives the repentant sinner. But of course, it's not just a lesson, a history lesson for the people of Israel at the time that that psalm was written.

[5 : 10] No, it's a lesson for all times. And it's a lesson then that has to be taught through the generations. And to be taught within the community of God's people, such as ourselves.

Because it's a lesson about the one true God. God, the eternal God. God who is, always has been, always is, faithful and merciful. The God of all grace.

And the God who cleanses from sin. Who's faithful. Who's our covenant God. It's a lesson then that we have to teach our children.

It's a lesson about our great and glorious God. It's a lesson about our Savior that we cannot hide from our children. As we said, just after the baptism of little Catherine, three things I want to draw your attention to in relation to responsibility.

The shared responsibility, the necessary responsibility, and the ongoing responsibility of this generation and generations to come to tell our children our great and glorious God.

[6 : 19] Look at verse 4 again. We will not hide them, the things of God. We will not hide them, the truths of God, from their children. But to tell the coming generation glorious deeds of the Lord and His might and the wonders that He has done.

So, the psalmist is relating the faithful acts of God to His people. The psalmist is revealing who God is in His faithfulness. He's speaking of God in His covenant love and His mercies and His kindness. Kindness to His people. Kindness to His children. And there's a resolution then given. Notice, we, look at the emphasis, we will not hide them from their children.

But to look at we and them. It's not, you know, not we will hide them, not hide them from our children. We will not hide them from their children. So, it's not just our children, but their children. In other words, there's a shared responsibility from God's people, not just our own flesh and blood, but to all children under our care as a community of God's people, as a church.

[7 : 28] The people of Israel had a shared responsibility to tell the children in the community of Israel, to tell them of the acts of God.

These acts of God that saved them, that delivered them and continues to save them. Every year, and quite rightly every year, there are acts of remembrance to remember the fallen in our wars. As you know, I'm chaplain to the Legion here, and one of the works of the Legion is to go around schools to tell children of the actions of those who gave their lives in battle for the safety and security of our nation.

To tell of those who by sacrifice in war gave their lives for others. And we will tell their children. We will tell them of the actions of the past to remind them of the courage and heroism and sacrifice of those who've gone before.

I mean, it would be unthinkable not to tell the generations of previous acts of previous generation for taking the life of our nation.

[8 : 45] We have a responsibility, a shared responsibility to remind the generations of these things. So, if that's the case, well, how much more, how much more the responsibility of God's people to tell our children and other children of the truth of God's wonders, to tell the truth of the wonder of salvation in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

You who know Jesus as your Savior, it's for you to pass on that message, the message of the saving love of the Lord Jesus to tell your children and other children of Him.

Jesus' work on the cross. It's not for you, it's not for me to hide from the children before us. It's the truth of who God is and His grace and His mercy and His love.

It's not for us to hide the truth of the faithfulness of God and saving sinners. It's not for us to hide the truth of the once for all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

And whether you're an actual parent, a church parent, you have a command not to hide the truth about God and His great works of salvation, not to hide that truth from the children whom God has given before us.

[10 : 09] But then the question follows on. How do we do this? How do we not hide from our children the glorious deeds of God?

How do we not hide these things? What message do we use? Well, look at the passage. Look at what the passage says. Verse 4, middle of verse 4, we will tell to the coming generation.

We will tell. Telling, recounting, giving an account. How do you do that? Because you speak it. When you give an account of something, you use words.

And of course, you take time to recount something. And you have a commitment. You're recounting something that's important. You're not just rushing through it. You give speech. You give time. You give commitment. I mean, the very length of the psalm itself, you know, it shows the importance of telling generations, present and future. We'll speak about future generations in a moment.

[11:12] How important it is to give the details of God and his glory and his grace. The very length of the psalm surely informs us of the importance of commitment.

You know, and taking time to teach the generations of children what's been passed down from previous generations. You know, we live in a soundbite age.

You know, you go on the various media that's used and given information. Mostly anyway, short text, short tweets, whatever, you know, whatever passes for knowledge.

But the Bible isn't soundbite. You know, we don't take short cuts to the truth. So, we've got a responsibility. You've got a responsibility. I have a responsibility to take time to show commitment to tell our children before us who God is.

What God has done for us, for them in the gift of the Lord Jesus. So, it's important that you tell them why it was necessary for Jesus to come to earth.

[12:20] So, we'll tell our children about creation. We'll tell our children about the fall of man and sin. We'll tell about the promise of our Savior. We'll tell about the coming of the Lord Jesus to deal with that problem of sin.

We'll tell them about the teaching of the Lord Jesus. We'll tell them about His miracles that point to who Jesus is. Yes, we'll tell them about His death on the cross, what it means, for their children to give their lives to Him and follow Jesus.

So, we'll do it by telling, telling these truths. Whether we do it at home, whether we do it at church, whether we do it in a Sunday school, or a Bible class, or at Little Jewels, whatever opportunity God gives us, we will tell our children of the glorious deeds of God and His faithfulness and salvation.

It's a shared responsibility that involves all who truly love the Lord. It involves you whose heart's desire it is for the little ones around us to know the Lord Jesus.

and I just want to say a few words to those of you who have taken vows for the baptism of your children. You've made a promise before God to bring up your children in the nurture and instruction of the Lord, instruction, if you like, and discipline of the Lord.

[13:47] You've made that promise. But we might also say that we all, before us, who have witnessed the baptism of children, we've made that promise to ensure the instruction and discipline of the Lord in their lives.

As a congregation we have a responsibility, whether it be to little Catherine before us, to all the children that God has given us. We are blessed as a congregation with children.

So don't renounce the responsibilities that God has given you towards these little children. And particularly when we realize, we've come to our second point, that the instruction that we give to our children is a necessary responsibility.

I mean, it was necessary in the Old Testament days as we see here to tell the generations the glorious actions and power and wonders of God.

And it's just as necessary today to tell our great God and King. Now, think of the Old Testament days when these words were written.

[14:56] I mean, the generations, the children of the generations needed to be told of God and His goodness because, of course, it was in their history of their forefathers' disobedience and God's forgiving them their sins.

I mean, it's necessary to learn lessons from the past so that we're reminded of who God is and His glory reminded so that we don't repeat the misdeeds of previous generations.

There's a well-known saying in the teaching of history in general, those who do not learn history are condemned to repeat it. You know, those who teach the subject, you know, we do so for many reasons.

One reason is to show the errors of absolute power, absolute power that corrupts absolutely. We show the errors of the pride of man, that pride that leads to destruction.

We show the mistakes of past generations. We teach these things to present generations, not to repeat these mistakes. So in teaching our children, when we think of the story, the great story of salvation, when we teach our children the story of salvation, we're doing it so that they'll see the consequence of their sins, the consequence of rejecting the Lord Jesus.

[16:30] But of course, we also teach history to show the sovereignty of God, to show the ways of God in the church and in the nations. The ETS, for example, the church history course, that's what the church history course does.

We show how God has worked in the past, how God has brought people to know Him through His Word, how God has raised up individuals to shine the light of gospel truth in a dark world, to show how God's hand has been and is still at work in spreading the gospel, the good news of salvation across the nations.

God doing that in His perfect timing, according to His perfect will. But you know, there's a war, there's a war against our children, the war in the very teaching of their minds.

God's left out of history, left out of instruction, whether it's in our homes or our schools. So it's necessary, necessary that you, that we teach our children about the Lord Jesus.

why Jesus came to save us from our sins. And it's necessary to warn our children of the consequences of rejecting the Lord Jesus because it's so clearly spelled out in Scripture.

[17:52] It's necessary to tell our children about our sovereign God who does all things well. So as we think in these truths, we're reminded, we're reminded of the wisdom of Solomon and these words that surely should stir us up in our responsibilities.

train up a child in the way he should go. Even when he's old, he will not depart from it. In the way that he should go.

What is that way? The one way. The way of salvation. The way of the cross. It's the way that generations before us have walked who know the Lord Jesus and who passed on that training, that instruction in the Lord and passed that on to subsequent generations.

It shows us that it's an ongoing responsibility to tell our children the glory of our God and Savior. See verse 6 and 7. The ongoing responsibility that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God but keep his commandments.

You know, it's a sobering thought. The very message that's preached from Lord's Day to Lord's Day, the very word of God that, you know, that you teach your children, that word that's given to them isn't just given for their sake, but for the sake of future generations.

[19:29] Think of the blessing that many of you know from your parents, your parents who taught you the things of truth that their parents had been taught.

Now, okay, I know that not all of you have had Christian parents, Christian grandparents and so on, but we all have had parents and have parents in the Lord. We all have faithful men and women who brought to your heart the word of God who told you of the glories of God and his work of salvation, the Lord Jesus.

Even this morning, we thank God for those who have gone before us who have told you, told us, me, of the things of God. So, you know, you call before God and give thanks to him that you can see God's hand in the work of others and teaching you the things of truth, because that's been happening from one generation to the next.

I see it even in miniature in this congregation, whether it's a parent this morning who's presented his child for baptism, the very presence of the children that we've seen already before us.

The seed of gospel truth is being sown from one generation to the next. I pray, and you pray, pray that by God's spirit, that that seed will produce a harvest of righteousness, that there will be the conversion of the generation before us and future generations yet to come, that God will, by his spirit and his mighty work, bring these children and future generations to know him as saviour.

[21:18] So we have an enormous responsibility as a church, not just to the generation before us, but to the generations to come. It's a sobering thought, it's a massive thought, that what you teach your children, what you tell your children, what we bring before them, even in the context of this church family, impacts not just them, but future generations.

We won't see these future generations, or many future generations, I pray that God willing we will see the immediate future generations, but there are future generations we will not see, not see, certainly not in this side of eternity.

We pray that by God's grace, that even through the very work of this congregation, that future generations will come to know the Lord Jesus as a saviour.

That is an awesome thought. We've spoken already about community. Be that community in action. Don't minimize your responsibility, your contribution, yes, to the well-being of your children, but remember there's going to be a time when we pass on, and we pray that the work that's been carried out, even in this congregation, the families of this congregation, will bear fruit to the glory of God, and that truly the words that we have read in this psalm, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn and arise and tell them to their children, that that will be the case. So what will you tell them? Well, as verse 7 tells us, we'll tell them what truly matters. You see, three things, three connected things that that verse gives us, to set their hope in God, not to forget the works of God, and to keep his commandments.

[23 : 23] In other words, we'll tell them about God, the one true God. We'll give them that knowledge of God as is revealed in his word. Why?

Well, as we've said, for that great purpose that they in succeeding generations will trust God, will know him, will follow him. It's such a responsibility to bring up our children in that nurture and instruction of the Lord.

Surely, our hearts desire to want to teach our children to know God as Lord. The only way to the Father is through the Lord Jesus the Son.

That's what we're about here. That's what we're about. We're not brainwashing our children. We're not giving them any kind of false misleading information. We're certainly not giving them something that is actually detrimental to their soul, to harm their mind, not at all.

We're giving the message, the simple, wonderful message of the gospel that tells of the good news of salvation of the Lord Jesus. And that the most important thing that a child can learn is to know God.

[24 : 39] to know Jesus as Savior. We're faced with a challenge. It's a challenge that a service such as this brings to our mind.

Don't shirk from that responsibility. Don't shirk from that challenge. It's a challenge for me, for you, to be faithful as a congregation, as a community of God's people.

And to remember the generation, the current generation and the generations to come. God has, as we said, blessed this congregation with children. We have a responsibility.

And it's a responsibility of commitment. Notice again, verse 4, as we come to a close. We will not, there's the emphasis, we will not hide these things, the things of God, the things of truth from our children.

We will notice, we will tell the coming generation. And even now in the quiet of your heart, we'll commit before God.

[25 : 49] Yes, again, a little child baptized this morning, a little Catherine Helen, and commit before God. Yes, the children who have been baptized in this congregation and collectively declared before God, we will not hide God's truth from these children.

We will tell the next generation. Amen. Let us pray. Oh Lord, our God, you give us many comforts, yes, many challenges.

You give us the comfort of the assurance that your word is true. And that all that you have promised in your word of granting and giving salvation to all who put their trust in you.

And we know that your word is true and is fulfilled. And we thank you, Lord, that even again for this morning and all that you have taught us through your word.

We know, Lord, you have given us a challenge. And Lord, we confess before you the many times when we have failed in telling our children of the great and wonderful truths of the gospel.

[26 : 58] forgive us, Lord, we pray. Enable us the more to have that resolution in our hearts, to be committed, to give time to our children.

Bless, then, we pray, the work of our families. Bless, Lord, the teaching done in our homes to bring our little children to that knowledge of the Savior.

Bless, Lord, the work of our Sunday school, of our creche, our Bible class, little jewels, Lord, we pray for every endeavor made to present the name of Jesus to the children before us.

We pray too, Lord, for the work that is done elsewhere in bringing forth the knowledge of the Savior. We pray for the work of missionaries, even those from our own congregation, who have told and are telling of the Lord Jesus to children.

Children in different countries, different continents. We pray, Lord, for that teaching, that your word will not return to you empty, but accomplish what you desire.

[28 : 06] Lord, continue then with us, we pray. Bless our fellowship one with another after the service is finished. Bless, Lord, we pray for the remainder of your day.

Continue with us, Lord, as we wait upon you. Go before us, now we pray, as we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we've read from the psalm, we've preached from the psalm, now let's sing from the psalm.

Psalm 78 on page 101, verse 1 to verse 6, and the tune is Ottawa. Oh, my people, hear my teaching, parables I will unfold, give attention as I utter dark and hidden things of old, things that we have heard and known by fathers.

they were shown. 1 to 6, Psalm 78, to God's praise. God. All right. There we can also happen to be here to be able to bring up the pace that flowing.

And so ■ to the Toddolare to the future. The 70 average of the and shame is holding 23,